

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES
CITY OF MILPITAS
SISTER CITIES COMMISSION**

Minutes: Regular Meeting of Sister Cities Commission (SCC)
Date of Meeting: Thursday, May 22, 2003
Place of Meeting: Milpitas City Hall, 455 E. Calaveras Blvd., Committee Conference Room

I. Roll Chair Garcia called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Commissioners/Alternates Present: Chahal, Downey, Garcia, Iringan, Swiger
Commissioners/Alternates Absent: Arthur, Lind, Tsao, Grilli
City Council Liaison Present: Bob Livengood
MUSD Liaison Absent: Mike Mendizabal

II. Alternates Alternate Downey was seated.

III. Pledge Chair Garcia led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Minutes **MOTION** to approve the Minutes of April 24, 2003.
Noted changes: None
M/S: Chahal/Iringan Ayes: All

V. Agenda **MOTION** to approve the May 22, 2003 agenda.
Noted changes: None
M/S: Chahal/Iringan Ayes: All

VI. Announcements/Correspondence

Staff distributed commission business cards and the 5/22/03 *Milpitas Post* editorial. Staff Liaison announced she will not be present at the June meeting and requested commission members contact the Recording Secretary should they need any assistance.

VII. Citizen's Forum

Al Garcia, 1134 Ridgemont Drive, Community Advisory Commission Chair, announced that he was speaking on behalf of the City Council, Police and Fire Departments regarding the National Neighborhood Night Out. The goal is to increase neighborhood participation, build neighborhood spirit and allow people to connect with their neighbors. Mr. Garcia stated that he is visiting each commission to let them know about this event and he distributed program information. Last year six neighborhoods participated. Desired participation this year is at least eighteen neighborhoods. Currently, twelve neighborhoods will participate.

VIII. New Business

1. APPLICATION FOR SISTER CITIES RELATIONSHIP: HUIZHOU, CHINA

Frances Chien spoke as a representative from the Silicon Valley Chinese American Association (SVCAA). Two years ago, members of the Huizhou government came to Milpitas and were very impressed during a reception held by SVCAA. They expressed a strong interest in establishing a sister city relationship. Recently, the Mayor of Huizhou told the SVCAA that he would like to establish a sister city relationship with Milpitas. Both are beautiful, friendly cities with a strong high technology business sector. Huizhou officials are interested in a cultural and educational exchange program and representatives are here to make a formal request for a sister city relationship between Huizhou and Milpitas. Mr. Chien distributed a list of supporters, some of whom will speak during the meeting. Huizhou is approximately 60 miles north of Hong Kong, with a population of 3.2 million, and an area about 10 times the size of Hong Kong.

Hong Lei, from the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China spoke about the sister city relationship policy in China. He stated that the Chinese municipal government established the rules for sister city relationships. There is a national Chinese Peoples Friendship organization which oversees sister city relationships and the organization is based in Beijing. The basic rule is that one city in China can only have one sister city in a foreign country. For example, Shanghai, China has a sister city relationship with San Francisco, therefore, Shanghai cannot have another sister city in the United States. However, Shanghai can have other friendship relationships with cities in the U.S. This rule does not prevent the Chinese cities from friendship relationships. Huizhou does not currently have a sister city relationship in the U.S., however, Tianjin does have one with the state capital city of Connecticut. Most of the major cities in China already have a sister city relationship in the U.S.

Sean Liou is a member of President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. He lives in Fremont and owned a technology business in Milpitas for twelve years. In his role, he has a visible presence in the Asian community across the country. He stated that the most important and vital part of Milpitas is the citizens. Through a sister city relationship, the cities can share cultures and this will also help with diversity issues.

Gunawan Ali-Santosa, 2290 Glenview Drive, is a member of the city's Telecommunication Commission. He stated that a neighbor approached him about a proposal for a sister city relationship and he asked how this would benefit Milpitas. His neighbor arranged for him to watch a video on Huizhou. He has never been to China and concluded that the proposal represents tremendous opportunities, such as the sharing of art, education and history. We can also share information about Chinese medicine and develop a friendship to promote peace.

Peter Chen, stated that his company, Neon Technology, has been in Milpitas for fourteen years. His company works with Selectron and the Taiwan American Commerce Dept. Also, the company frequently exports to Asia and is currently working with Taiwan and China Telecom. His company does business with AOL and other U.S. companies. Mr. Chen is also a member of SVCAA.

Eileen Chen's company, Suncrest Enterprises, has been in Milpitas for ten years with headquarters in China. She has been to Huizhou and stated that it is a beautiful city and she supports a sister city relationship with Milpitas.

Toby Yip, 285 Edgewater Drive, spoke as a representative of the young Chinese population. He has lived in Milpitas for ten years and is a senior manager for ORACLE. His company has done work in China and his parents own an electronic business in Huizhou. He has been there twice and stated that it is a beautiful city. He noted the difficulty in finding skilled technical workers in Huizhou and he thinks this can be a benefit for Milpitas technology workers who may want to work in China. He believes that a sister city relationship will open up career opportunities for Milpitas youth.

Jerry Shiao, founder of Silicon Valley University at 1649 South Main Street, used to live in Milpitas. He worked for Cisco for five years, then he began the university. The university started with the assistance of the current and prior mayors, with a focus on MS degrees in computer science and engineering. The school is a non-profit organization and their national accreditation is pending. He believes that Huizhou is a compatible city with Milpitas. Many of his employees live in Milpitas.

Andrew Lee, Vice Chairman of the SVCAA stated that their organization is very active in the Bay Area. Many of their members live and/or work in Milpitas and he represents their community support.

Chair Garcia: Stated a concern that the majority of speakers had a main focus on business.

Chien: Stated that their intent is not to focus on business and they would like to focus on culture and education. They are working on a plan and would like to have a student exchange program. He stated that youths are preparing a written proposal about a cultural exchange. Huizhou is a 1,400-year-old city and there is a long history to share with Milpitas. The involvement of businesses helps to generate needed funds for cultural and other exchanges. He will be asking for donations from businesses for the program. The current Vice Chairman of the SVCAA is a large contributor to social programs, and the group would focus on education and culture to develop a sister city relationship with Milpitas.

Swiger: Asked questions about Huizhou's geography.

Chien: The area of Huizhou is about ten times the size of Hong Kong so the density is much lower.

Chahal: Asked how many people live in one square kilometer.

Chien: Replied he will find out and report back.

Garcia: Requested for this item to be moved to the June agenda at which time the commission will view the video.

Swiger: Requested to receive the full 20-minute video presentation at the June meeting.

Garcia: Requested proposal demonstrating how the SVCAA would facilitate the cultural and educational exchanges of the sister city relationship.

Mr. Chien thanked the commission for its review and direction. He introduced Dr. John Longwell, President of the Santa Clara County Medical Association, Saratoga Medical Clinic, as a supporter of the sister city relationship.

By consensus, the commission carried this item to the June agenda.

2. DAGUPAN RELATIONSHIP: SCC POINT OF CONTACT & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Commission Swiger noted that the commission has a duty to review the sister city relationship, however many of the activities may take place outside of the commission. He stated the need for someone to report to a contact person on the commission to keep them updated. Commissioner Irinigan volunteered to be the contact person and will determine local points of contact for Dagupan. By consensus, the commission carried this item to June to obtain an update from the Dagupan City Association of Northern California.

3. 2004 CITY CALENDAR REQUEST

The commission voted unanimously to cancel its meetings in November and December 2004.

M/S Swiger/Iringan Ayes: All

IX. Old Business

4. APPLICATION FOR SISTER CITIES RELATIONSHIP: TIANJIN, CHINA

Gisella Meng stated that many residents have shown enthusiasm for a sister city relationship with Tianjin. She will present signatures from resident supporters at the next meeting.

Ms. Gillespie, the Executive Director of the Asian American Donor Program, stated that this is a thirteen-year-old non-profit organization. There is a Milpitas resident who used the program. She supports the sister city relationship because it would help communication between the donor registries in China and the U.S.

Hong Chen of Gric Communications spoke on behalf of his employees. He resides in Saratoga, but his office is in Milpitas. He stated that a sister city relationship with Tianjin would open a positive collaboration between the U.S. and China. Officials from the City of Tianjin have visited his offices and he would like to see a student cultural exchange.

Steve Lu, is a member of the Senior Advisory Commission and president of the Chinese Evergreen Club at the Milpitas Senior Center. His daughter is a resident of Milpitas. He supports the idea that Milpitas could have a sister city relationship with one of the largest cities in Mainland China. Tianjin is very generous and welcoming; they greatly enjoy having guests. Through this relationship, there could be advantages for seniors, such as senior cultural exchanges, as well as political and student exchanges. Tianjin is also famous for the Chinese Opera and perhaps they could send a delegation to perform and attract people from major cities to Milpitas. Many members of the Evergreen Club come from the Tianjin area.

Ms. Meng is communicating with Tianjin officials who are eager to work with Milpitas. They have their history to share and are very open to the Milpitas culture. Tianjin's education official likes the idea of a student cultural exchange. She will bring residents to a future meeting who are willing to host students from Tianjin.

Garcia: Liked the comments by Mr. Lu and the idea of involving seniors. She would like to see a core group of citizens who have some proposals and how they plan to support this aspect of a relationship.

Ms. Meng: Thanked the commission and requested to continue this item pending further research.

Councilmember Livengood: The commission is looking for community support. Is there a large interest from people who live and work here and are they willing to keep the sister city relationship going? It is important to demonstrate this to the commission. This can be time consuming and the quality of support is very important, particularly during visits.

By consensus, the commission carried this item to the June agenda.

5. POTENTIAL ONE-YEAR EXTENSION, MILPITAS/TSUKUBA MOU, AUG. 2003 – AUG. 2004

Chair Garcia reported that the City of Tsukuba responded with its disappointment that both cities are unable to conduct their mutual visits this year, however, Tsukuba desires to extend the current MOU for one year. Staff noted that, pending formal recommendation from the commission, an updated MOU would be presented to the City Council at its June 3, 2003 session. Staff would update the MOU for presentation to the City Council to reflect effective dates of August 2004 and 'City of Tsukuba'.

Motion to recommend updates to and one-year extension of the MOU with the City of Tsukuba to City Council at its June 3, 2003 session.

M/S Iringan/Swiger Ayes: All

X. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

None noted.

XI. Future Agenda Items

1. Potential One-year Extension, Milpitas/Tsukuba MOU, Update on Council action. (June)
2. Application for Sister Cities Relationship: Tianjin, China (June)
3. Application for Sister Cities Relationship: Huizhou, China (June)
4. Dagupan Relationship: SCC Point of Contact & Add'l Info (June)
5. General calendar/procedures checklist for preparing cultural exchanges (TBA)
6. Discussion with Sister City Association representative (TBA)

XII. Adjournment

No further business was discussed with the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. until the next regularly scheduled meeting, Thursday, June 26, 2003.

Motion to adjourn.

M/S Chahal/Iringan Ayes: All

Respectfully Submitted,

Holly Cuciz
Recording Secretary

Leslie Stobbe
Staff Liaison